

Documents on Diplomacy: Lessons

Dueling Speeches:

John F. Kennedy & Ronald W. Reagan in Berlin

Standard: I. Culture
II. Time, Continuity, and Change
III. People, Places, and Environments
IV. Individual Development and Identity
V. Individuals, Groups, and Institutions
VI. Power, Authority, and Governance
IX. Global Connections
X. Civic Ideals and Practices

Grade Level: 9–12

Objectives: The student will:

- Analyze two famous speeches
- Understand the relevancy of the Berlin Wall in the context of the Cold War
- Determine the impact of speeches by John F. Kennedy and Ronald Reagan
- Comprehend the devolution of the Communist Soviet Union from Kennedy to Reagan

Time: 1–2 class periods

Materials: Documents: **1963** "*Ich bin ein Berliner*"
1987 "*Mr. Gorbachev, Tear Down This Wall!*"

Resources: *Collage History of the Berlin Wall*
Timeline of the Berlin Wall and Change in Europe

Speeches:

John F. Kennedy <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hH6nQhss4Yc> (4 min.)

Ronald Reagan <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WjWDrTXMgF8> (5 min. excerpt)

Exercises: *Dueling Speeches: An Analysis*

Procedures:

1. Project or have copies of the Berlin Wall on students' desks when they arrive.
2. Ask students to identify the photo. When this is done, provide copies of the *Berlin Wall Timeline* and the *Collage of the Berlin Wall*.
3. Match the photos, by placing the dates from the timeline with the photos (when possible).
4. Discuss the building of the wall and the presence of communism and the Soviet Union in East Germany during the Cold War.

- 5.** Explain to students that they will hear two famous speeches, one made by President Kennedy in 1963 and the other by President Reagan in 1987. Both speeches were given in Berlin and addressed the significance of the Berlin Wall as a threat to the free world. Relay that both speeches are viewed as two of the most significant speeches made by presidents of the United States.
- 6.** Distribute copies of the documents, "*Ich bin ein Berliner*" and "*Mr. Gorbachev, Tear Down this Wall!*"
- 7.** Prepare to show videos of the two speeches. (*Note:* The excerpt of President Reagan's speech begins on p. 2 of the written copy with the paragraph, "And now the Soviets. . .")
- 8.** Have students follow the written copies as they listen to the speeches. They should read all of President Reagan's speech after viewing the video.
- 9.** Distribute copies of the exercise, *Dueling Speeches: An Analysis*. Have students react to the speeches based on the requested information.
- 10.** Discuss students' impressions of and reactions to the speeches.
 - a.** What are the positives of each speech?
 - b.** Refer to at least four statements per speech that are memorable in their phrasing and intent.
 - c.** How does each speech highlight the negatives of the Berlin Wall?
 - d.** Is it possible to measure the impact of each speech? If so, which made the most difference in history? Did both speeches make an equal impact?
- 11.** Have students to imagine that they are at the Berlin Wall on either June 26, 1963, or June 12, 1987. They should record (tape record or in written form) their feelings, emotions, and thoughts on the day they experience.
- 12.** Share the students' recorded results. ■